

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

February 23, 2017

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

**Governor's H.B. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFORE**

Good afternoon Senator Osten and Senator Formica, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Elvin Nieves.

When I was living on the streets, I felt like I was a nobody. I was hopeless and alone. Then someone gave me a phone number for the clinic to help me with my depression. I called the psychiatrist, who gave me a phone number for the clinic and clubhouse at Intercommunity and Common Ground. Going to therapy, the clubhouse, and the clinic almost everyday, helps me to keep a handle on my depression. Anthony and Beverly and the staff at Intercommunity have always told me to keep my head up and keep moving forward and I can do anything.

Now that I am at the clubhouse and out of the house, I have become involved in advocacy work. Recently, I have also become a part of the Keep the Promise Coalition, and have seen what Connecticut Legal Rights Project and the Regional Mental Health Boards do for people in our community. I am proud to work with them and hope that I can continue to be their partner.

The opportunity to talk to others like me and participate in activities that allow me to be independent has helped me to feel like I'm a part of society. The other people at the clubhouse are my family and support system now. They have helped to make me feel more humble and supply me with hope for the future!

Thank you for your time and consideration